

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 35 and 43.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS:

1-34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended): A method for identifying a candidate compound capable of binding to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide which is at least 95% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the polypeptide exhibits carboxylesterase activity; and
- b) a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which is at least 95% identical to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3, wherein the polypeptide exhibits carboxylesterase activity;

the method comprising:

- i) combining a compound to be tested with a sample comprising a cell expressing the polypeptide under conditions suitable for binding;
- ii) assessing the ability of the compound to bind to the polypeptide; and
- iii) selecting a compound capable of binding to the polypeptide;

wherein the cell is selected from the group consisting of a brain cell, a cell derived from spinal cord, and a cell derived from dorsal root ganglion;

thereby identifying a candidate compound capable of binding to the polypeptide.

36-37. (Canceled).

38. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 35, wherein the compound is selected from the group consisting of a small molecule, a peptide or an antibody.

39. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 35, wherein the polypeptide further comprises heterologous sequences.

40. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 35, wherein the binding of the test compound to the polypeptide is determined by a method selected from the group consisting of:

- a) direct detecting of test compound/polypeptide binding;

- b) a competition binding assay; and
- c) an immunoassay.

41-42. (Canceled).

43. (Currently Amended): A method for identifying a candidate compound capable of binding to a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and
- b) a polypeptide encoded by the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:3;

the method comprising:

- i) combining a compound to be tested with a sample comprising a cell expressing the polypeptide under conditions suitable for binding;
- ii) assessing the ability of the compound to bind to the polypeptide; and
- iii) selecting a compound capable of binding to the polypeptide;

wherein the cell is selected from the group consisting of a brain cell, a cell derived from spinal cord, and a cell derived from dorsal root ganglion;

thereby identifying a candidate compound capable of binding to the polypeptide.

44-45. (Canceled).

46. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 43, wherein the compound is selected from the group consisting of a small molecule, a peptide or an antibody.

47. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 43, wherein the polypeptide further comprises heterologous sequences.

48. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 43, wherein the binding of the test compound to the polypeptide is determined by a method selected from the group consisting of:

- a) direct detecting of test compound/polypeptide binding;
- b) a competition binding assay; and
- c) an immunoassay.

49-66. (Canceled).